Interview with Ambassador Theodore R. Britton Jr.

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

Ralph J. Bunch Legacy: Minority Officers

AMBASSADOR THEODORE R. BRITTON, JR.

Interviewed by: Ruth Stutts Njiiri

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Q: This is an interview with Ambassador Theodore R. Britton, Jr. as part of a Phelps-Stokes Fund oral history project on former Black Chiefs of Mission, funded by the Ford Foundation. Ambassador Britton served in Barbados and the State of Grenada and as U.S. Special Representative to the States of Antigua, Dominica, St. Christopher, Nevis, Anguilla, St. Lucia and St. Vincent. He served in these countries from 1974 to 1977. He is presently Acting Assistant to the Secretary for International Affairs, Department of Housing and Urban Development. The interview is being conducted on Thursday, July 16, 1981 in the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, DC. Interviewer, Ruth Stutts Njiiri.

Ambassador Britton, what were the events which led to your entry into the diplomatic service?

BRITTON: One day I received a call from Stan Scott, who's now with Philip Morris, who was then Assistant to President Nixon and later Ford, asking if I were interested in an

Ambassadorship because he knew that I had a long standing lifelong interest in Foreign Service. This is what got it started.

Q: What were your first impressions of Barbados and Grenada?

BRITTON: Well, they're two separate places, of course, but my first impression of Barbados, of course, was pretty much what I expected since I traveled in the Caribbean. That's a very bright ... place with, you know, because of the temperatures being in the Atlantic and so forth. I spotted beaches, and what have you before I landed. I was met by a large group of people, reporters, members of the, my staff and so forth, my potential new staff. And so my impressions were warm of being received as someone, of course, special at that time.

Q: You also served in other areas, and I think we will break those areas down eventually, but would you give an overall view of what you felt in those other countries?

BRITTON: Yes. I might say that I didn't comment of course on Grenada. By the time I went to Grenada I'd presented credentials to the Governor General of Barbados and the second go-round was to present credentials to the Governor-General of Grenada. It was not quite as, as lavish in terms of the reception but, nevertheless, quite as warm.

I was met, of course, by the protocol people from the Government of Grenada and in due course was received the same day, my wife and I were, by the Governor-General and his wife. I also had my, my Deputy Chief of Mission and his wife with me. All of us were present as I presented credentials and was received and hosted by the Governor-General and Lady de Gale in Grenada and later we met with other officials, including the Prime Minister.

With the, the other islands or island governments, it was unnecessary to present credentials as such to the Government since these were credentials being presented to the heads of government — the premiers and so forth. Nevertheless, in each case, of

course, I paid my respects on the governors of the particular states, again being received very warmly. I think they were somewhat flattered to have a, a black ambassador for the first time. In addition, they were very happy to receive a new U.S. ambassador who had gone out of his way early in the game to visit them as such and to establish friendships with them, friendships which lasted until this very day. I still regard those days with a lot of warmth and a lot of good feelings. I miss them too.

Q: I believe it was about eight years after the independence of Barbados that you began your service. Would you describe U.S. presence in Barbados.

BRITTON: At that point the U.S. had a substantial mission. I think we must have had about the largest mission of the groups as such. The British were represented there; the Venezuelan Government and the Republic of China had a small mission there. In addition, there were branches of the, of the British Overseas Service dealing with assistance to the, to the islands, and I believe that the Canadians also had a substantial operation there in which they supported the is ands. I did mention Canada had a high commissioner there. By the way, Commonwealth countries have high commissioners, high commissioners; non-Commonwealth countries send ambassadors to each other. But this was how things stood.

The U.S. had a naval facility operating in Barbados and I think it was about the, it was certainly the largest employer in St. Lucy Parish and one of the sizable employers on the island. We had a naval facility in, in Antigua along with a missile- tracking station in Antigua as well. So the U.S. had a good presence and by-and-large, a substantial amount of goodwill.

Q: What would you say U.S. policy was towards Barbados?

BRITTON: I think I sort of mirrored it when I said that I thought that the U.S. policy remains supportive of the hopes and aspirations of the people of Barbados while at the same time having a healthy respect for them as a fellow independent nation, a democratic nation

and so forth. And to the extent that we had a large amount of similar history and common background, both having been British territories at one time, and secondly, the warmth and the interchange of people over the years, meant that we had a long and continuing relationship of good feeling. You may recall, of course, that George Washington, our first President, in his only foreign trip spent time in Barbados, for which they warmly remembered and commemorated in some of their things. Alexander Hamilton, our first Secretary of the Treasury, of course, was born on the Island of Nevis, and so forth.

Q: Would you describe the political climate in Barbados at the time?

BRITTON: The political climate vis-#-vis U.S. was one of kind of respectful standoffishness; friendly; you might say a little reserved. The Prime Minister of the day, a wonderful person, but nevertheless staunchly independent. He had led his country into independence. He had a strong British heritage and, of course, as I say, he, I think he felt strongly about his British heritage to the exclusion of, of America, although I have to be careful about that. He was married to an American lady, by the way. I would say then that on balance it was friendly but not effusive. And I have to say that throughout I maintained what appeared to be the best of relations with him, even when, when from a public stance, relations may have seemed to have been different. But he had a country to operate; I had a mission to operate. I understood his problems and I think he understood mine.

Q: How were you perceived by the Government of Barbados both as a representative of the United States and also in your own capacity?

BRITTON: Ah, of course, in three years perceptions change; they evolve. Let me say it this way. There was an editorial in one of the papers after I'd made a speech which said that I had done more for Barbados than any other American envoy, and it pointed out that I had aided Barbados with financial assistance in areas of agriculture, health, culture, equipment, military types of equipments, housing advice, health; in short, I'm not sure that he left anything out.

The Prime Minister at the time, I think, in early, early in 1976, at the dedication of a new weather tracking station near the airport, pointed out that I had secured for them the largest contribution to Barbados, you know, from the U.S. Government. And even still later when we saw the delivery of a vessel to the Barbadian Government through the U.S. Government, or from the U.S. Government, he pointed out that I continued to have a great interest in Barbados and had done more for Barbados than anybody else. And this came sometime after maybe some rather tense moments in which it didn't seem that we had that kind of relationship. So I, and I might say that I traveled a great deal around the island visiting people and institutions, churches, all kinds of organizations or businesses, so that I was perceived, I think, as the most active and interested, one of the most active and interested people on the island in everything that was going on.

On balance then, I would say, however immodestly, that I was well received and I thought that they got the impression as it was reflected in the editorial, that I was more than a figure head occupying a position, but that I was a person who had some authority and a great deal of interest and didn't hesitate to exercise that authority and influence to benefit the people of Barbados.

Q: Would you talk about your relationship, please, with the diplomatic corps. How were you perceived by your peers?

BRITTON: ...(laughs) ... This would have been an interesting one because I'm not quite sure that I, I ever measured it. But let me say this. Of course, I had relations with, for example, the Republic of China, at a time when other countries had moved towards the Peoples Republic of China. The Ambassador of China happened to have been the dean of the diplomatic corps at that time. Now, we had a small group, but normally the dean is sort of the chairman of the diplomatic body and answers all of their questions and problems. In a sense I feel kind of guilty because I seemed to dominate the headlines of the Times. Maybe I had more skill at dealing with the press. By the same token, of course, when you represent the most powerful nation in the world and maybe you're the only black

ambassador in a largely black country — Sir Winston Scott used to remind me it's multi-racial — you do attract more than your due share of attention. My colleagues then must have suffered through my, my constant being out front. However, I will say that I went out of my way to keep very close to them.

The Chinese Ambassador obviously commiserated with me since he, he had close links here. Ultimately he retired to become a citizen here, he and his wife. His children had been born here, so they were already citizens. But they, they, I would say, they got along well. The Venezuelans I had a close feeling for. My goodly friends in Canada, yes. And finally others who came into the island went out of their way to look me up, including my friends from Nigeria and other places. So I would say that I was regarded all right by them. I certainly did nothing to upset them. Even when new ambassadors came in who had not been accredited, I would go out of my way to welcome them. Now normally you don't do this kind of thing. Until they're accredited, really, they don't exist. But from a humane stand point, I always went out of my way to make them feel comfortable and welcome even before they presented credentials, which certainly was unusual for them, and it made them feel very happy.

Q: Do you find that, in retrospect, that you had any problems because you were a representative of the United States?

BRITTON: None that I saw. I like to think that I did a lot so people who expected things from us lived up to them, I mean found we lived up to them, and by the same token they were aware in my speeches of those things which we simply could not, or, you know, would not do. So basically it was, I would say, that was about it.

I saw no personal problems and I never had anyone to, to remind me except that I might have been, maybe, a little bit more outgoing. There are always those who say we should cool it, so to speak, but I was happy to be there. It was a great time in my life. My family- I had four children with me — they were very happy to be there. They were teenagers,

some, and this was a great time in life for them and, of course, for a group of American black children to be members of the first American family in any place is very important. It did a lot for them. In fact, I, I long to see more and more black Americans, especially, benefiting from this kind of exposure and experience because it does so much for us in general. Sprinkle it about the population and you have a people that have a greater perception of themselves, in general. When you live in the States and you're simply perhaps a black family among a large number of other families, predominantly white, you are simply, just simply another family. When you become the number one American family in a group of other American families, both black and white, then you are indeed a special family. So this is how it comes out.

Q: That touches somewhat upon my next question and that concerns your ambassadorship as a black American. Did you find that there were any particular advantages or disadvantages to this?

BRITTON: Only from the point of visibility, I would suppose. But to the other side of it, I might say that everything must have balanced itself out because, at that point, I must have traveled to about maybe fifty or sixty countries. I'm a well-read person; high on public affairs; have a great appreciation of biography and history and so forth. So my acquaintances were broadly with all people, without regard to race. Whenever I found distinguished Americans coming into the country, whether black or white, I would go out of my way to welcome them and to make the facilities of the Embassy available to them. I suspect that some of my colleagues of the past, being white, may not have recognized some of the important black Americans, just as perhaps down the line some of my black colleagues of the future may not necessarily recognize or appreciate the contributions of some of their white distinguished Americans. I hope that I'm proved wrong, but I had an appreciation for all of the people and I had a great knowledge of them.

Political figures I knew; I welcomed. And I went out of my way to show this in all cases and I might say that I put across, because I had seemingly a very large following among the

predominant British population. I happen to be an anglophile of sorts. I've traveled a lot to England and with the name like Britton of course ... (laughs) ... in a largely British place. It attracts attention. But people knew that I had a great appreciation of things and people British so this also added to that kind of appreciation.

Q: Obviously you had many accomplishments in Barbados. Is there one in particular that you feel was the most outstanding that you'd like to talk about?

BRITTON: I'm not sure that there is any one thing of which I feel more proud of than others. There were just so many. I guess if I had to reflect on it, I would say that the opening of the Regional Assistance Office was perhaps the singular thing that will stand out and remain longest.

During my administration there at the Embassy, we opened a Regional Assistance Office administered by AID, you know, Agency for International Development. And we served throughout the Caribbean, including Belize, to help the various smaller countries. This was with some, I suppose, some reluctance on the part of many. I was told that people were not always interested in doing things. They regard them as small, the islands and so forth, as small and consequently not deserving of this. (Recording stops and begins again.) Going back then to the Regional Assistance Office, my feeling was that the, although the standard of living or the per capita income of islanders were larger than the poorer countries of the earth, that we like to think of, nevertheless, these were people who to me had to shop from the same supermarkets as Americans, and whereas the income, the average income or per capita might have been, say, upwards of a thousand dollars or so, that's like nothing when the, when the poverty line in the States may have been somewhere like six thousand or seven thousand. So I felt that they deserved special help, and I was happy that the Regional Assistance Office came into being to promote agriculture, to promote better housing, better health and education. So I guess if I had to, to be proud of anything, I probably would be most proud of this. I understand it's grown substantially, for which I'm very happy.

Q: In what area or areas were you most disappointed during your service in Barbados?

BRITTON: I think I was most disappointed in having to leave when I did. Basically I was pleased with it and I felt that there were some more things to be done. I was committed to it and obviously having reached my lifelong aspiration, I would have been pleased to continue. But the change of administration, despite my many friends and the new party and the new government, and their, their sort of proffered offers of assistance and what have you, I was replaced and that's all of it. It taught me something else too.

But I, I have no regrets over anything that I was able to do. I learned some things. I had one or more people who were big problems and I had to ask their recall, which was my right as Head of Mission, Chief of Mission. I learned belatedly that that's not the best way, and so for future ambassadors I offer the thought that if you have someone who's a very difficult person to deal with and who simply is of no help or benefit to you, that you don't do yourself any real justice by asking that that person be returned. He simply returns to the headquarters and becomes one to campaign against you. So it's better that you suffer him in silence in your post and simply reflect your unhappiness in fitness reports but not to send that person back.

Q: Are you saying that this is something that happened to you during that period?

BRITTON: Yes. I had cause to, well, very pointedly, ask for the recall of, you know, the gentleman who later caused an article to appear, very unflattering, in one of the papers, with a great deal of untruths for which the newspaper did nothing whatsoever to check sources or to check authenticity. And it was blatantly designed to be biased against me.

That's all part of the experience, but again, as I say, it taught me that particular lesson. It could happen probably even if this gentleman was not the case in point or the catalyst. But I as I say, I learned and I pass that advice along to any new ambassadors. If you get an incompetent on your post, don't, don't use your prerogative of sending that incompetent

back to the State Department in Washington. He may be incompetent on your post and that may be part of his strength: to be competent back at the Department in terms of undermining your position. And he may know that by going there, being sent back to the post — to the Department — he's not going to be disciplined or fired or anything like that. But if he loves being in the State Department, this is his opportunity to go back. So one can bait you and get back without even your realizing what's happening.

Q: Would you like to talk about how you overcame that difficulty?

BRITTON: I would only say that the, the State Department, of course, in the course of its, its raising questions about this gentleman and having to deal with it also, had to face other newspaper people who were much more perceptive than the Washington Post people who had written the article, unfavorable article, in the first, place. And they forced the State Department to conclude that this was merely a so-called employee grievance which had nothing to do with competence or incompetence of the Ambassador himself. And they, of course, somewhat grudgingly admitted that they had complete faith in the Ambassador and that he was remaining at post and so forth. So, I felt vindicated, although it was kind of a backdoor vindication.

Q: But there was no effort to recall you?

BRITTON: Oh, good heavens no! ...I hasten to add that I did have some difficulty the previous year with the then Prime Minister, in which there was a letter, sort of a modified letter of protest, sent to the State Department regarding my calling into question some governmental decision down there, which was eventually resolved. And as I say, the Prime Minister and I became, you know, we remained friends then; we also are friends today. But at that point, it was one of those things that were a little bit touchy.

Q: What kind of relationship did you have with the State Department while you were away?

BRITTON: I had a good relationship with the State Department. Actually, the Secretary of State coordinates the work of all ambassadors and I obviously, I think I may have had about two or three or four Assistant Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries of State in the course of it. But we were colleagues. By and large they understood the problems of running an embassy, particularly in a country in which the American Ambassador was highly visible, so we got along well. (Tape stops and begins again.)

For example, I remember when I was under fire from the Prime Minister of Barbados relative to the situation involving American air carriers. Talking with my Assistant Secretary then, who was Assistant Secretary William Rogers, I said, “Bill, if I'm creating a problem, please let me know and I'll always be ready to throw in my paper to you.” And he said “No, no, no, no, no!” He said, “We're behind you and I want you to know that.” He said, “We just don't want to lose you in any kind of fire fight that's unimportant.” And he said, “So you just hang in there and you just, we'll just work this out, but don't worry about anything.” And sure enough ...I think that the Prime Minister may have been in one of those posturing things and election was coming up and he himself had been kind of accusing, had been accusing the U.S. Government of destabilizing the Caribbean, so to speak. That being the case then, his sort of attack on me was part of that continuing process. But, again, I think it was probably more political. He might have been serious about it but you know, about my raising questions, about the way they did things. But suffice to say that we're, I like to think that we're still friends today.

I remember it was just a short time later, if I recall, I was sitting down to have lunch, just himself and me and his wife. It was just three of us having lunch out in his garden. It was on his birthday, so it was sort of a birthday celebration. So I said to myself, I guess you couldn't be closer in terms of relationships on something like that.

Q: Obviously you had many wonderful experiences in Barbados and you have many fond memories. Would you talk about some of the fondest memories that you have of Barbados?

BRITTON: All right. I, in fairness I think I need to cite something else that would be of interest to you.

The Marriott Corporation is, is owner of the Sam Lord's Castle Hotel. Sam Lord's Castle is a, a very special place in Barbadian lore and history. The Marriott people on one occasion invited me over and having gone through their initial dedication, of course, I was simply one of the spectators sitting in the crowd of dignitaries. Eventually when they had a further dedication of this some months later, I was invited again and I made sure that they really needed my presence. I was busy at the time. Secondly, it was on the other side of the country, the island, so to speak. And so I was assured that they indeed wanted me to be present.

I was then present on that occasion and in the course of their, their program they introduced, properly, the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, and proceeded then to introduce private persons within the, within the group, their employees, employee's families and so forth. And I called, touched Mr. Marriott on the shoulder and I said, “Mr. Marriott, you didn't introduce your American Ambassador,” and he said, “Well we can't introduce everybody.” And I said, “Well, perhaps you're right.” And with that I said, “Mr. Prime Minister, I'm going to be leaving, so I'll be in touch with you later.” I then signaled to my wife and another couple, friends, Gene Webb and his wife, from New York, and we left.

You see, getting back to something on protocol. It is not just the person; it is the office. I am there by virtue of my role as U.S. Ambassador and not because they like me personally. I left and, of course, this eventually generated into something in the newspapers that brought down a great deal of condemnation on Mr. Marriott, in which even at one point he suggested that I should be apologizing to him for, for leaving. And on

the other hand they said, well, you should apologize to the Ambassador for not introducing him, and it went back and forth. It caused a temporary polarization; both the militants and the conservatives sided with me on the basis, of course, you don't treat an American dignitary like that. And some others said, you don't treat a black dignitary like that. But basically it addressed the same thing. Now, of course, if Mr. Marriott or any of his people had had a problem with the government of Barbados, the first thing they would have done would have been to run to the Embassy and the most important person therefore to them in such a situation, and indeed in the course of their host country, one of the most important people is their American representative. So I, of course, left and this created a great deal of, of attention... (laughs) ... you know. So it was, it was one of those things that I'll always remember. It stood out because it dominated the headlines causing all kinds of editorials and so forth, and things like “Marriott Was Rude” and you know, that kind of thing.

I still say that I want to support American business in any place and I call, I wrote a little note to the Prime Minister in which I said that I hope that always American business will be interested in coming to Barbados and to other developing countries, to help out. However, I hope that we're never guilty of bringing forth any of our, well, should we say, anti-social practices, and by the same token I hope that we're educated into our responsibilities as citizens, business citizens, or corporate citizens of a new country.

That we do have responsibilities to live up to, the Prime Minister understood. I also sent one to the Deputy Prime Minister. I like to think that I had friendship with them. But they could understand some of the sub-surface things. They didn't get involved in it. Obviously this is a matter between someone who represents the U.S. President and one of the citizens of that particular country of which the U.S., you know, the President is a president, so to speak. But that was another thing that, that came up.

Q: Were any apologies extended?

BRITTON: No. Mr. Marriott said no apologies would be extended or offered and so forth, which then further irritated or infuriated some Barbadians. As I say, even in more militant Barbadians who, who were anti U.S. as a matter of course, came to the side of the American Ambassador because he happened to have been black in this case. I didn't want this to become that kind of a thing and so I tried to keep it on the line of, since I was not recognized, then obviously I wasn't present. So if I left, no one missed me because I wasn't there in the first place... (laughs). If on the other hand, if I had, if I had refused to come, I think, that would have been sort of an implied snub of a very important venture on the part of an American business. And I think it's important for American business to recognize their relationship to an American presence and I think that's reciprocal, too.

You asked a question about some of the more fond moments, proud moments. I would suspect that my proud moments came whenever I was really called upon to stand on behalf of the U.S., to, in a sense carry the flag. I felt proud, of course, when I, when I attended gatherings and had my family there in which they received some of the accolades and the attention that came to me as American Ambassador, but also came to their father and finally to the members of their family. Even my little, my little grandson who then was about two, three years old, participated in many things and stood with me. And I thought that this gave him a head start in life in terms of being a participant in some important things that would later come back to him in life.

We had American ships to visit: nuclear submarine, a cruiser, destroyer and, of course, whenever I went down to visit them, of course, the members of the crew were lined up on deck to receive me. And, of course, the person who receives you aboard — I think he's called the boatsman—always announces, “U.S. coming aboard.” And that was the number one American, that was the Ambassador, of course, with my, with my family. And I think this must have done an awful lot. I think it's a great memory, a treasured memory to carry forth. So if I did nothing else in life other than to make my family feel proud of me and my accomplishments and their participation, this would have been sufficient.

Q: In retrospect, are there any things you would now do differently if you were serving in Barbados?

BRITTON: I think only in degree. Of course, I mentioned this business about dealing with staff. When one has difficulties in human relationships, one is really hard pressed to say how does one deal with it. I like to think that I can get along with anyone. This is not necessarily to say that everyone gets along with me. And sometimes, of course, there are difficulties.

I remember situations where, for example, my Deputy may have been what I considered perhaps somewhat harsh on one of the staff, I helped that staff member to kind of work through at least a softening of the difficulties he was encountering. I talked with him a few weeks ago, by-the-way — very happy to hear from me. He happened to have been white.

On the other hand, on some other cases, I found that the person was not an easy person to get along with. So I learned, as I said before, that you simply suffer through that person but you don't send them back. So I would be very careful in that future type of thing. I learned, of course, that obviously these people are career people. They view each newcomer with suspicion and this suspicion is — and prejudice — is carried forth through other councils of government including the Congress or the Senate. So one has to be very careful about exercising an authority on the basis that it can be totally misinterpreted and can be done on, received on the basis that the one who performs is an absolute incompetent in an esoteric area.

For me, operating an embassy is only a management job and nothing more. I think that anyone who can read and understand policy and objectives can unite resources to carry these objectives forward, or to achieve these objectives. So I think that if I had to leave any kind of advice, I'd always say to any person, it's merely a management job. But you must know what it is you're managing; you must know what the resources are; and you must

have a good understanding of your country. And this would be about, you know, some of the things to be remembered.

Q: Before we leave...

BRITTON: ... If you wish, I can comment further that I say that this was a very, it had a large number of different units. I made a number of suggestions which were, at that point, were rejected and which are now very much in effect. I felt that we were, we were taking advantage, inadvertently, of people who lived in the, in Antigua, St. Kitts and other places — three, four, five hundred miles away — by forcing them always to come to Barbados to do their business related to visas and so forth, and immigration. They had to spend a day or two in Barbados for this and I felt that we could have sent one of our people up there to deal with them. That's now being done. I understand we have a consular office in Antigua, which makes it very easy now for people who're almost eight-hundred miles away to at least come a short distance to take care of their business.

I felt that we should have a much more active assistance program, regional of sorts. And that's now being done. I regretted very much that eventually the navy facility was closed. But that's all part of it. I would have preferred that they keep it. Now as we talk about helping in the Caribbean, in some respects we're benefited and in other cases we have to start from scratch.

My saddest moment in Barbados was the loss of my oldest son. He was not in Barbados with us; he was in the Air Force and he lost his life at a boating accident in Michigan. And, of course, this brought an outpouring of sympathy from all over the, the island as well as up into the other islands. So in a way it was a reassuring type of thing; on the other hand, it was a very sad occasion.

At the funeral, which was held at the Riverside Church in New York, it was attended by something like twenty-five hundred people or so. The Ambassador to the United Nations from Barbados delivered the eulogy. And by the same token the, there was a large

testimonial from the Prime Minister, the Governor-General, and others in Barbados, from Barbados. So I just felt, well, so bolstered, helped by all of these expressions in what would have otherwise been a very, very sad moment.

Q: How old was he?

BRITTON: He was about twenty-four at the time. But obviously one's oldest son, name sake and so forth, most promising, I guess, but just leaves you completely shattered.

Q: He had spent some time in Barbados?

BRITTON: Never...

Q: ...never.

BRITTON: ... but that was about the saddest one, I think. The other saddest one was, of course, was leaving Barbados. And I've been back several times since then, when I'm always treated royally. (End of Tape 1, SIDE 1)

Q: I'm sure there are many more things you'd like to say about Barbados, but why don't we now go on to some of the other areas. Before that, would you like to talk again about the events which led to your entry into the diplomatic service?

BRITTON: Okay. This is interesting now. When I was young, of course, in high school, a group of us were always interested in Africa and we, we kind of decided that one day we would take control of Africa and set up a great African empire. We never asked the Africans what they thought about all of this. We had our own internal problems in the group; the leader of it decided that some of us didn't look African enough so we had some internal ...(laughs)...that broke up.

But I guess about two or three years later I was serving in the U.S. Marine Corps in the South Pacific. And I began reading about Ralph Bunche, who was then serving with the

Anglo-American Caribbean Commission. He was the highest ranking black diplomat known. I think Clifton Wharton Senior was already a consul-general in the Azores, but I got to know a little bit about Ralph Bunche. And, of course, I developed a lifelong interest in the diplomatic and consular service itself.

Well, once I returned, of course, I didn't have the kind of background that would have gotten me an appointment in the service, apparently. And so I decided to go on down the line and try to get the kind of background that would add to it. The years that, the McCarthy years, of course, turned me somewhat against government service, particularly with the State Department. You know, I just felt, I felt uncomfortable about that. (Tape stops for a short time and resumes again). So down through the years I continued to have an interest in (movement of tape recorder blocks sound) ... appointees ... in different areas, and so forth. And eventually through someone here at HUD, Harry Finger, I eventually came to government as ... as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology.

I had a very tireless worker for a boss. He called me his partner. So I had to carve out my own area, which seemed then to be, naturally, foreign research. I began doing some travel abroad. On one visit shortly after, afterwards, a friend — Joe Battle from North Carolina — was visiting me and Joe had served in Nigeria at some point as an AID (Agency for International Development) worker. He had with him a fellow by the name of Horace Dawson. Horace is now U.S. Ambassador to Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland.

When he asked if I could come to North Carolina, Joe asked if I could come to North Carolina, I said no, I'd be in Europe. Horace then asked if I could do some programs for them while I was in Europe. He was with USIA, U.S. Information Agency, now International Communication Agency, and I agreed. And I went to Germany and down to the UN; I sat with the UN delegation in Geneva and finally over to Spain.

Interestingly, I met a fellow, a very wonderful person who was my program officer in Hamburg, who's now U.S. Ambassador to Liberia. His name is William Swing, who went to school with Walter Fauntroy. But this started a number of them. Every time I went out of here, which was on a regular basis ... by this time I was vice chairman of a group of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, in Paris. I would do other programs for the U.S. Information Agency to Ethiopia, to Kenya, to Tanzania, Malawi; later on out into the Far East, into, into Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Turkey, and so forth. And this just became a regular part of it. UK (United Kingdom), France, and what have you. In fact, they appreciated the programs so much over at USIA that they simply asked, where would you like to go this time? And that was it.

But I built up this thing and Simeon Booker, God bless him, began to notice my interest in foreign affairs and, interestingly, he asked me one day if I would, if I were interested in ambass...embassy. And I said, “Sure!” He offered and he promptly ran my picture in there, you know. Ted Britton, bla, bla, bla would accept an embassy if offered and some other things. Other news articles. Apparently people at the White House read too, Stan Scott included ...(laughs).

So Stan asked me about this, my interest, and I said, “Sure, by all means.” It was, he was talking about Upper Volta and, of course, one of my classmates at college, and classmates in the Glee Club as well, was Elliott Skinner, professor of Anthropology at Columbia who had served as ambassador to Upper Volta. As you know, it was a lot of little things tied in together.

After Stan invited me, and I began talking with some of the fellows over at the White House, I realized that the process was a slow one. And I asked one day if anything was needed and they said, “Well, all the help you can get would be needed.” I sent to my two Senators, both Republican Senators from my home state, New York, who didn't seem to

have a great deal of push and drive on my particular behalf. They did nothing to oppose me, by-the-way. But their participation was somewhat limited.

And as an afterthought, I remembered a gentleman whom I had gotten to know and had established a good friendship with. I was doing some research on behalf of the State of South Carolina, my home state (I was born there), and because of my appreciation of this particular Senator's personal background, while at sometimes being critical of some of his politics or social views, we had gained a good deal of, sort of mutual respect. He asked me to call upon him anytime that I felt that he could be helpful, and he appreciated everything that I'd done. We were both born in the same county. You know, I spent my early years there and he represents the State now. That gentleman was Strom Thurmond, Senator Strom Thurmond.

When I asked him for his help he sat down and dictated to the State Department, to Henry Kissinger personally, personal and confidential, one of the best recommendations I've ever seen. And, needless to say, when that letter reached Secretary Kissinger's desk, all kinds of bells began to ring. The Undersecretary for Management called me; the Assistant Secretary from Inter-American Affairs, the Director-General of the Foreign Service, and the Deputy Secretary of the Department of State all called me to come over for an interview. And believe me, I was on my way from that point on.

This is a long-winded process and we had at that time a very ubiquitous Secretary of State who was going back and forth and we had a change, and so forth, right in the middle of it and change of Vice President. And so that, although I started in the summer of 1973, it wasn't until the Fall of 1974 that I was nominated.

Now there's another part to it as well. Normally when the U.S. or any other country proposes to send an ambassador out, its Ministry of External Affairs or Department of State, as the case may be, sends a letter or sends word to the receiving state that they proposed to send a given person as ambassador, and they ask if they would accept this

person. It's called an Agr#ment in French, which means agreement. Normally you have one country and that's about it. If I were being appointed to Greece, the ambassador or the diplomat in Greece would go to the Ministry of External Affairs and say that we propose to send Britton over here. Is it all right for you? And assuming there was nothing in my background that was offensive to the Greeks, they would say, yes, by all means, we'll accept him. That would be it.

But here I had ten separate political entities: Barbados and Grenada, who were independent countries, and I had, I had five semi-independent states, and in addition I had the Ministry of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Great Britain, because in some of these countries, foreign relations were still handled by Great Britain, not to mention the colonies, Montserrat and British Virgin Islands. So I had about seven or eight. So I had the two independent, the five semi-independent, that's seven, and Great Britain — that's eight.

During the month of July and August everything suspends itself in Europe; very little is done in terms of business, government business. They're all on vacation. And, of course, September is a sort of start up month, so although I might have been finished up in the, the summer, I still had these agr#ments to be received. And of, course, that means coming from Great Britain, down to the islands and from the islands back to Great Britain and so forth. Of course, the foreign affairs, as I say, was handled by, by Great Britain for many of the islands. Barbados and Grenada were separate. Whereas Barbados has an operating Embassy here, Grenada does not. So we got the other problem there.

I might say that I had a problem too. I had a property which had been foreclosed at one point and a judgment had been secured on me, so I had to get that judgment cleared up, among other things. There were always those little reasons of, you know, why you shouldn't get somebody else.

One of my friends at the White House one day, Greg Lebedev, who was really in my corner throughout the time, he was on personnel, said that, keep in mind at any given

time a thousand people would want to have a position like this. He said, five hundred others may be from the State Department; they've had foreign experience; they speak a number of languages; they're well qualified; they have degrees in international relations; and they think that they should be rewarded with an embassy as part of their career up, you know, their career promotions and what have you. He said an additional two hundred and fifty may have been people who are specially qualified, who have never been in State Department but who know the islands or the particular countries. They speak a number of languages; they've taught international affairs; they've been up-to-date; they've been Republicans that participated in things. So those two hundred and fifty feel that they should get the first shot.

And finally there's a group of two hundred people or so, two hundred and fifty, who know the President personally and they've done special favors for the President, and they've worked very hard for the party and for the President. And they too feel that they should be number one. He said, “Just put yourself in a line with all of those people and just ask yourself how do your qualifications compare with all of their qualifications, and he said, then you see what you have to do to really go past them to become the ambassador. And believe me, when I saw all of this, I said, well, gosh you know, you really, there's really an awful lot of work to be done. So I got back to it.

Simeon Booker did a masterful job of, in a sense, suggesting my candidacy. Stan Scott was an extremely good friend in inviting my candidacy. Greg Lebedev was a very patient person in sitting with me and going through and keeping my name alive at the White House when many other people wanted, you know, to jump into the act. And finally, Senator Thurmond, by virtue of his friendship, his interest, his own personal standing, when he sent out his letter just got immediate attention. And so I, those persons are people whom I'll always be grateful to and by the same token, it says something about the process. I had to be known by somebody who counted. I had to be known and appreciated

by somebody, people who felt that I could do the job. At the time I had to have something that would indicate that I had the capacity for it.

At one point I said, kind of jokingly, that you had to be somebody and you had to know somebody. . Well, it still follows. If you aren't known to the President, whether directly or indirectly, and I had never met President Ford to that point, I had met President Nixon, but President Ford did the appointing. If you don't know the President or somebody who is close to him, you don't get appointed because the process simply says you won't be put on the list; you won't be sent over as a nominee. Having said that then, when you got to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, you are not automatically accepted because you're a presidential appointee or nominee. You're accepted because you stand the test before them; they're a separate branch of government.

I remember so well the story of this gentleman who was nominated to, I think, Malaya and who was asked the name of the Prime Minister and being flustered and sort of in one of the quick moments where the Prime Minister's name was a very long type of name, completely forgot his Prime Minister's name. And it was always, he was always taken as a bad joke that here you get these political appointees who don't know their own, the name of the Prime Minister of the country they're going.

Well, then take my situation with ten different political entities. I had two prime ministers, five premiers, and approximately three chief ministers, not to mention governors-general, and governors. And I had to know all of those. And so when I sat down I, in a sense, for lack of better words, it was like old home week. The members of the Senate and by-the-way, Senator Hubert Humphrey was sort of presiding. Senator Sparkman was chairman, but he came in late. And I might say in that same group, of course, was Senator Javits, who was one of my home state Senators, and Senator Percy who later on became a very, very good friend down in the islands and so forth. But once you sit before that committee and you start answering questions, you're not automatically through by virtue of sitting down there. You're in once they vote you in. So it would have been possible for a less-

informed person or a person who took it unseriously to be knocked out of the ballgame, so to .speak, because if you were asked what's the name of the prime minister or the premiers of the five associated states, it might not be important that you know all of them, but it is to some extent offensive to a given state when you have to say, well, I really don't know the name of that prime minister.

You asked about people: Simeon Booker. Simeon is the Washington editor and correspondent for Johnson publications including Jet and Ebony, and it was Simeon who, crusty old grouch that he is, sort of took a liking to me and decided to kind of let the world know what some of my hopes and aspirations were. He once asked me what was I doing in Washington? I said I didn't know. I said, “One of the things I always had some reservations about Washington, about government but the one thing that I always wanted to do was be in the State Department, period.” And he picked it up.

Stan Scott had come down as assistant to the director of communications for, for the White House under President Nixon, and Herb Klein was then the director. Stan eventually became assistant, special assistant to the President after Bob Brown left; Bob had been his predecessor. And Stan continued right up to the time he became assistant administrator for AID for Africa. But, again, he and I met ... (laughs)...and became friends. When I first heard Stan in a meeting, we were meeting together, I said, “Gosh, why does that guy talk so much? He's new.”

But sure enough we became very good friends and it was ultimately Stan's invitation that got me started for, I suppose, my highest position in life and my most rewarding and my life's aspiration. I would have come in gladly in the State Department to come in at the very bottom to do almost anything just to be there. It's even more rewarding to come down the course of life and to be given the very highest of positions. It's almost like saying that the system was prejudiced and it wouldn't allow me to come into the bottom so the system changed and I came in at the top, which is again one of those great things.

Greg Lebedev, who now works for Hay Associates here in Washington as a vice president. By his name you can tell he's white, of course. It's an eastern, eastern Ukrainian, eastern European decent. Greg is a wonderful, very sensitive guy and believe me, I can't thank him enough for all that he did to help this process. He always was encouraging. He said, “I'm not doing it just because it's you. It's just that I think you'd be a great thing for the country, period.” And that kind of encouragement really was tremendous and I appreciate it.

So those are some of the actors — Senator Thurmond, as far as I was concerned, had one of the most, one of the most outstanding records of any public servant in the Senate: former governor of his state, state senator, judge, major general in the army, who had run as a presidential candidate, received the highest number of electoral votes ever for a third-party candidate; I think it was around eighty-nine votes or something like that. When he decided to change his party, he did the most honorable thing that any politician can do. He resigned his office and stood before the electorate under his new political colors, and from Democratic to Republican and was again reelected and today is president pro-tem of the Senate as well as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee and still senior Senator from South Carolina.

When I first met him, I was doing some research for South Carolina and he wanted to get me involved and they said, “Hold it, Senator, he's been doing more than anybody else over at HUD to help South Carolina.” And he said, “Well, how come?” I said, “Well, I'm from South Carolina.” And I said, “Senator,” I said, “as far as I'm concerned you have one of the best records of anybody ever to sit in the Senate, but,” I said, “And you've had a lot of high positions both in our native state, but I don't think you've done enough to really benefit the poor people of that state, white or black. And so I hold you accountable for many of things that happened down there, the bad things.” And he said, “Well, I know that I have not had, not always done maybe as well as many of you would have expected me to and maybe my philosophy was from a bygone day.” He said, “I've changed now because I see that

what I used to think as people's unwillingness to help themselves was really due to many impediments placed there by people like myself." And he said, "I've dedicated my life to making this a better country and better state." He said, "If you are sincere, and I believe you are, you will join forces with me to help create a better country and a better state." He said, "We may differ on positions, but as long as we're friends and respectful of each, we can respectfully and honestly differ and who knows? I may convince you, you may convince me, but we can still work together." And out of that came that kind of work and participation.

I was doing something on what's called "add-on-bathrooms" for South Carolina. A hundred and fifty thousand homes had no indoor plumbing, leading to worm infestation and so forth, among kids, and what have you. So this is how we got to know each other.

And, again, I say many things were working to my benefit, but among other things, it was Senator Thurmond's letter to Henry Kissinger that really and truly got things moving from what might have seemed like a horse-and-buggy pace to a rocket pace. Things took off like a rocket, like some kind of missile. And I have the greatest of respect and admiration for him, appreciation. I've told him many times that many things I may not have in life but I do have gratitude, and he always knows how grateful I am. I certainly go out of my way just to send him a little note and say, "I just want you to know I'm still grateful, and if I can be of help, let me know." When I see him taking positions that I have some questions about, favorable or unfavorable, I quickly call them to his attention. And I think to him it may be reassuring to know that he has people who while they don't necessarily agree with him on everything, and agree with him on some other things, we call it to his attention. When he went to attend the funeral of Joe Louis, I was busy here and I couldn't break away from what I was doing. And here's a guy who's a senior Senator, chairman of the Judiciary Committee and president pro-tem of the Senate, he was able to get away from his responsibilities. And he said, "I did it because I admired Joe Louis as a great American who had a lot of feeling for his country and I wanted to be there to pay my respects." I don't think the newspapers, black or white, gave much particular attention to him. I asked him

why was he there, but he was there; and I appreciated it. Because it reinforces something that he has told me privately. So this, these are the kinds of people who made it possible for me to be there.

I might say that in 1972, after the election, I sat with my family, all five children, and I, my wife, and I said, “Okay, now that the election is over, what shall I do? Plan on getting back here, getting back into private life, stay with it, or shall I look for an embassy or something? I hope to get into Foreign Service at some point.” And the family said yes, they felt that I should try for an embassy. This is in the Fall of 1972. So we all took a little pac there, you might my say. That's why in my speech at the time of swearing in I said, “I have to give credit to a little or sometimes loosely organized group operating out of a little brick and red, red and brick frame house up on Gunther Avenue in the Bronx, who made a calculated decision to get its senior member into the U.S. Foreign Service, and this is a culmination of those efforts.” And so I said, “I give credit then to those members of that little group. My two daughters and my three sons did it.” So it's kind of a longwinded thing. I appreciate this opportunity to kind of talk about it and reflect on it, too.

Q: What was the attitude of the State Department and the U.S. Government in general in 1973 about bringing blacks into the Foreign Service?

BRITTON: This is another thing. I think that the State Department is still open. I still think that we had a larger, probably a larger number or as large a number of ambassadors at that point than we have had in any other administration, even though President Nixon was not always looked upon as the most, most concerned with blacks and black aspirations as such. I challenge anybody to match the numbers. We saw, for example, the first and only general start out with General Haig as a colonel and by 1974 he was full general; that was Chappie James. Alexander Haig was also a full general. But this is probably the first and only time in history that we have had two colonels to start in 1969 and become full generals five years later. And one was white and one was black. But this was all under President Nixon.

Okay, I think that with the evolving number and increasing importance of, of particularly black African countries and so forth, there was a greater openness about rewarding black Americans, you know, by getting them included in the total apparatus of government. I thought the government was pretty much open on the question.

Now, something happened after that. Secretary Kissinger in a meeting with us in early 1975, after I'd been appointed in January, had with him his assistant, Larry Eagleburger. Larry Eagleburger eventually became Ambassador to Yugoslavia and he's now Assistant Secretary for European Affairs. When he was up for assistant secretary he seemed to be having some difficulty. I went out of my way to send a personal note, a long note to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, whom I knew personally — Senator Percy — and I made it for the record. I said, “In 1974-75, Larry Eagleburger, Deputy Undersecretary for Management, was charged with increasing the number of minorities, women and others, in the State Department. Larry is a very hard-driving, very competent professional sort of person. He demands perfection. And yet in the next few months or so, a year or so, I saw an increasing number of blacks appointed to higher positions in the service and medium positions and so forth, some of whom served with me in my own post, and at least three of whom I knew personally: Ray Robinson, who's now administrative counselor in Syria; Gilda Washington, who's a security officer in, I think, in Spain; and, what's the name, Watson, I forget the first name (I think it's Marcia Watson) who's now in, in Portugal, you know, as an administrative person. All, all became members of the State Department Foreign Service and they were helped a lot. People went out of their way to help them, people like Dick Fox. Ambassador Fox was my inspector general.

But my point to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was that while he had a great deal of personal competence, he also showed a lot of personal sensitivity for which I'm still grateful, for which I don't think he's ever gotten much credit and for which I strongly recommend him, not only for his competence but for his sensitivity in dealing with people across the board. And I thought that this was another feather in his cap in terms of

his nomination as Assistant Secretary for Europe. He's now confirmed. And I sent him a copy of my note, for which he expressed a lot of appreciation.

But getting back to the question. I thought that the U.S. stance at that point was sort of open and invitational to blacks to take a more active role in the Foreign Service. And I would say this: I think that at that point blacks tended to work much more closely together in terms of their role in the Foreign Service. We had at that point what was called the Council of Black Appointees, which meant that senior, senior level people got together to talk about some of their hopes and aspirations. We had the formation of the Thursday luncheon group of blacks and minorities involved in the Foreign Service or diplomacy.

Even though the climate under the next administration was supposed to be much better, we lost that ability to work together. Sometimes I'm reminded of a saying my father once said, that when you see a bumble bee flying about, you don't have to worry about him; he's all alone. But when you see a hornet, be very careful; they're organized. Those persons concerned with the Foreign Service and some other aspects of government, black, I think began to work more like bumble bees in the succeeding administration, the Carter Administration. They may have been efficient and competent in their own right, but because they worked less like hornets, they accomplished very little, because their personal achievements died with them. Whereas in other areas it would have been much more helpful if they had worked together.

I ran into a gentleman the other day who's holding a high level appointment and who was based very close to this same gentleman I speak of, Mr. Booker, right across the street. He did not know who he was. And yet he's a presidential appointee, probably about 55-60 thousand dollars. He's black. Didn't even know who Simeon Booker was. Which means that he probably did not read Ebony, did not read Jet. Okay, that's fine. Some of our people are very competent and what have you, but let's face it. The situation is still rife for mistreatment by still biased and unreconstructed people and we still lose a lot because of our unwillingness, our failings in not keeping a weather eye.

I'm saying that back in 1973, 1974, 1975, I thought that there was a much more cohesive working relationship among a lot of our folks and by the same token, the climate was such as to receive that cohesive working relationship. And I think from '77 to '81 we must have lost a great deal of it. And if we're not careful, we can do the same thing now.

Q: So you found that blacks during that particular period of time were showing a desire to enter the Foreign Service...

BRITTON: ...yes...

Q: ...and they had cohesive backing...

BRITTON: ...they, they...

Q: ...from other blacks...

BRITTON: ...yes, and I think the Administration was open towards helping them, too. Remember we did have ... we did have, let's see at that point,

Bill Coleman came down as Secretary of Transportation, hum...that got some things off. But I do think that at that point, in terms of the Foreign Service, there was a greater push on the parts of blacks, and by the same token we were getting greater, greater numbers of people involved in it.

Q: Would you like to talk now specifically about Grenada and your service in the other islands? You were, of course, based in Barbados at the time. What kind of reception did you receive from the people of Grenada and the other islands?

BRITTON: Wonderful reception. They always said, “He's our Ambassador.” And when I went up to them, of course, when you're an American Ambassador, you're somebody,

period! But to the extent that I was comfortable with them and looked like so many of them, you know, it made it even more ... and they were very happy to receive me.

Well, I was based in Barbados, but I went over to Grenada as often as I could and some of the other places, too. I participated in a goodly number of the things, public occasions. I always tried to make myself available when the ministers needed me. If there were special things they wanted to talk about, or needed help on, I would go out of my way to make myself available and get to see them; I would give them the greatest of respect. I would entertain them when I saw them coming to town. I think the very first public official I had to dinner was, now belated, deceased Premier of St. Kitts, Robert Bradshaw, who was always known as standoffish to Americans. Very, very pro-British. But he was just one.

I had lots of people down there who, as I say, were very, very hospitable to me as I traveled up and down the islands: Governor of Antigua, Mr. Jacobs, the Premiers Messrs. Walters, Bird and what have you. Over in Dominica they had a very tragic incident; about seventy-five people died as a result of a bus accident, and so forth, truck accident. And I felt badly about them. I went out of my way to, you know, try to get help for them and what have you. Up in St. Lucia, I always thought St. Lucia was well run, very democratic. John Compton was the Premier. Eventually he, I think he was voted out of office after I left. And down in St. Vincent the Government down there was well run. Milton Cato was the Premier there now. Both countries are now independent. I always felt good about one of the gentlemen down there whose name was Mr. Tannis, Hudson Tannis. He refused to travel anywhere because he traveled under a British passport and he longed for the day when he would travel under his own national passport. I talked to him in New York not too long ago and I think I can detect a note of pride in his voice as he talked, because he had a Vincincian passport.

Just up and down the line I had a lot of friendship with them. I went out as often as I could while being based in Barbados and trying to look out for things. Because I had, not I, but we had a naval base, a naval facility up in, up in Antigua. It kept me in close touch with

them. I set up what was called a defense liaison to the Ambassador, which by the way was criticized in the Washington Post article as building an empire and setting up my own navy and that kind of stupidity. It so happened we had four defense installations on my post. Technically they're part of the South Atlantic Defense Command. However, when the Ambassador is located on the islands, he is pretty much number one and so you had to keep some kind of liaison with them.

I found, for example, in comparing notes that the Embassy had an evacuation, emergency evacuation plan that called for everybody doing something and going in one direction. The Navy had an emergency evacuation plan that called for everybody going in the other direction. Now who's the brightest, or who's smart? Why is it that one group says go this way and the other says go that way, okay, and all interested in saving Americans? So I was able to get them together. I'm not sure...(laughs)...what got those plans in conformity But obviously, the Navy knew some things that we didn't know. For example, the French garrison on the island might have been able, ready to help them on the north end of the island and they had the ability if necessary to evacuate by way of helicopters, whereas our people were thinking of the airport, which is the first thing that closed down in the event of any emergency.

But this is the kind of thing, by getting the Defense Department to appoint this gentleman as Navy ... as liaison to the Ambassador, defense liaison, he then began to attend all the meetings. But this also meant that when we had ships coming into the island, why we were automatically aware of what was going on, when the ship was coming in and how we can be of best use to it. For example, they have a dinner or something aboard ship honoring the premier or the prime minister. These kind of things do an awful lot for building up good will, but you accomplish it by having a defense liaison who has instant access to defense communications and so forth, defense intelligence and so forth. So this is the kind of thing that went on.

Q: Are there any comparisons you'd like to draw between your experiences in Barbados and Grenada and the other islands?

BRITTON: They were all founded under British rule and British support and so their parliaments and their various forms of government pretty much followed the same pattern. I went down there with a goodly knowledge of British parliamentary practice; I came away with an enhanced knowledge. Sometimes when I begin talking about British practices and British decorations and awards and the peerage and so forth, people are astounded that I know so much. Of course, if they've had to respond to it, you know, as I have, then they would have a different, they would understand the knowledge of it. I've learned a lot from the way they do things and how they do them and I have a greater appreciation of them because of the way that traditions in Barbados, for example, is over three hundred years or so under British rule and is firmly entrenched in British, British practices.

But they're still open because they recognized they're independent and they can't necessarily show themselves how British they can be and at the same time be Barbadian. And so they're open. And other countries have also shown a great deal of openness to American institutions and ideas and I've had a chance to educate them a great deal about the U.S. and its institutions and ideas and people. I was fortunate in having visited forty-seven states of the union, that I can speak authoritatively about the U.S. and all that goes into it. And I'm a great historian in terms of my interest of ... I can speak authoritatively and knowledgeable about things affecting my country as well as their countries.

Q: Were there any controversial issues that arose during your time that you spent in Grenada or some of the other islands?

BRITTON: Maybe ... (laughs)...I should say, too, in Barbados and that, that's, and they aren't funny, of course. I think it might have been in the Fall of 1975, we had a problem between Barbados. The Cubans were landing planes en route, en route to Africa and the Angola situation, and the U.S. really wanted those planes to stop. Because, see, we were

asked as an Embassy to make representations to the Barbados Government to stop the Cubans from flying in. There was some reluctance or something. After all, it was sort of an internal matter. The Barbados, but by the same token it was something that could have affected a number of events in other places. So after a series of so-called representations, we were getting nowhere.

And I think it was because of one of my lunches — I was having lunch with the Prime Minister — and I mentioned some further things to him. I thought that this really could have been a danger to the country what with the tourist season coming up and what have you. Not to imply any threat, but I knew that there were always those kinds of things in the wings whether they were from, you know, from America or otherwise. I said, if something happened to one of those darn planes with those Cubans, if they happen to blow up or if there was some kind of tragedy on the air field, whether they're doing otherwise, it would certainly be tied into this kind of thing and you'd have, you'd have a great fear. I'm sure that this thing was going to happen or this kind of thing could happen. And I said it would just blow your tourist season straight to blue blazes, so you may really want to think about pulling that to a quick halt. And I don't know whether that had the particular effect, but shortly thereafter they stopped. And I could easily see that something serious could happen.

I'm not sure that I can take credit for it. Let's say that you don't go around waving a flag and say I made this government do this or that government do that, but rather that you do your job as best you can. If you succeed you're just quiet about it. Diplomacy is not always a loud thing, of course. When you get loud, you'll probably get bounced out of the country, because you don't want to be accused of controlling, unduly influencing a country. Politically in the democracy it's not good anyway for the national leader because he has to be seen as deciding himself what's best for the country. So, suffice to say that the flights were stopped.

At another time, of course, with the airlines situation which I think you read about in Spring of 1976, the Pan American had given up its route and had given that route over to American Airlines, and American Airlines was scheduled at a certain point to come in. Barbados, in the meantime, had applied for reciprocal privileges to fly into the U.S. The USCAB (United States Civil Aeronautics Board) raised some questions about Barbados, application as we, as a result of which Barbados did not get immediate approval, to which they promptly then suspended the ... not suspended but put the American Airlines on a holding pattern you might say, and the Eastern Airlines on a temporary permit.

So this had the effect then of cutting, cutting down on American's ability to start its routes. And with that I began to see that this could create some problems, as I saw it, both for the airlines as well as for Barbados. And at one point I raised the question that since this would create problems for them, wouldn't it be more desirable if Barbados Government would rescind that resolution, you know, putting it on the short leash and treat them like other airlines that were coming in.

I was also curious, concerned that because we were getting close to the bicentennial, that if ... if the carriers decided that they couldn't operate too well in Barbados, they would simply then switch all their traffic to the U.S. The bicentennial had a lot of people, coming in and they needed every plane they could. I think, as I said it came in the mist of a sort of budding political season and this was taken as an intrusion in the ... the internal affairs of Barbados. And so the, the Prime Minister went on the air and denounced me as the ugly American and what have you and threatened to send a letter of protest and what have you.

The upshot, of course, was that, eventually, it was settled and we all became friends. But for a while it had Barbadians kind of curious as to what was going on here. In one case, he had praised me so highly for doing so much for Barbados and on the other hand damning me ... (laughs) ... for being, you know, being outspoken. I think it might have had some kind of effect in some of the politics because people began to tell me

that they would ... they would do this and they would do that. And I said, “Listen, don't tell me; I'm not interested This is strictly internal and I'm just a visitor here. I'm a guest of the Government.” Eventually the Prime Minister — his party lost their majority at the polls and a new government came into being.

Still another time was when the Cuban Airline carrying a group of Guyanese people and Cubans and so forth somehow blew up as it took off from Barbados and landed in the ocean and people were forever drowned and never found and what have you. And shortly thereafter the Cubans came en masse to investigate it. The Prime Minister of Cuba had a big funeral procession, memorial, a mass meeting, whatever you want to call it, in which he denounced the American Ambassador as being a party to that. At the time I had to leave the country to welcome the new Prime Minister to the U.S. and that had been pre-planned. But when I left the country, not too long after this event, he then accused me of discreetly leaving the country to, you know, be out of the line of the fire, or whatever the case may be. That was another one that was kind ... kind of touching and, you know, gave me a little sense of insecurity. So I'm told that the Cuban people came and were armed and so forth.

I might say the same point. One of my colleagues from the U.S. Government who had sat with me in January at a meeting talking about different matters and who later was assigned to Lebanon, was shortly thereafter assassinated. And still another one of my colleagues who was from, I think, Peru, who had met with us at the usual Barbados independence celebration, went up to Jamaica and was stabbed to death. It became a time in which — a number of others had been killed or otherwise — and it became a time to be increasingly concerned about security and safety. One almost asked a question, how, if all of this happened in 1976, how is it we could be so careless and, say, '78 or '79,whatever it is, in Tehran, and let our people be trapped in that. That's all part of it. But those are some of the kinds of things that really were a little bit, a little bit tense, as it were. I spoke of the sad moment when my son passed, I guess another part was a rather sad one was the passing, almost immediately thereafter, shortly thereafter, of the Governor-

General. My son passed away about, I guess, about the middle of, the middle of the late part of July, and I received a very personal and special note from the Governor-General. And shortly thereafter he died.

A graduate of Howard University, one who had practiced medicine in New York, who really had a great deal of respect for the U.S. while still very much in his British traditions and so forth. But a wonderful person; was like an uncle, a father, a counselor to me. It was ... he took a great deal of pride in what I was doing. I knew a lot of his friends back here. Sir Winston Scott I am speaking of, the first black Governor-General of Barbados. He had a great deal of pride in what I was doing, and, you know, he wouldn't hesitate to call me down, come on down, you know. He was very easy-going; medical type of way. And there were times when we went out to the races and he had his very long limousine with motorcycle outriders, you know, and flags flying, and what have you. And for me to show up at the race track with the Governor-General in his own special box and what have you. Sort of signaled to the, to all and sundry who was his favorite...(laughs).

So obviously those are some of the more highlights. I was very much saddened by his passing. Those are some of the little things that go back...

Q: Did any of the controversies in Barbados affect your relationship in Grenada?

BRITTON: No, I don't think they ever did. No. at best, sometimes the people in Grenada would say, “Listen, any time those Barbadians give you a hard time, you remember you can always come over here to us.” The Prime Minister of Grenada would've dearly loved for me to set up an Embassy, for the U.S. to set up its embassy over in Grenada. They had no embassies whatsoever. And so they would have dearly loved it, but there were none.

The people at Grenada and some of the other places would have dearly loved if we had moved the Embassy over there. You see, one of the great products of this Embassy was visas and for shoror lonterm visits. And so to the extent that we would have been

located directly on the island, it meant that they would have had less cause for going over to Barbados, where they had to spend goodly sums of money to come there and to stay overnight and so forth. They would have loved it. And so this is why anything that happened in Barbados that suggested that I could come over there, they were happy to hear about it in a sense.

Q: Di d you have any personal preferences between Barbados, Grenada or the other islands?

BRITTON: Not really. Let me say this. Barbados is so well developed that by and large it's so much ahead of everything else. It has so many more buildings and structures; color television; regular radio programs; the wire-types of radios. It has an organized and regular ongoing kind of governmental set up. It had at that point the Navy, I mean the Navy facility; it had an international airport with a large number of air carriers coming in— Europe, South America and so forth, Brazilian, Venezuelan.

In addition, Barbados had a large ... a number of missions. Trinidad compared favorably but that wasn't part of my domain. Trinidad compared favorably and had many more things. It seemed to have been far less efficiently run. Its infrastructure was not as efficient as Barbados. The Caribbean Development Bank was located in Barbados, and so forth, and a very substantial telephone system. So they were in good shape ... (tape goes off) ... so Barbados had so many things in its favor that it would be difficult to compare. Or it's a little, shall we say, invidious to compare the other places with Barbados. It just had so much more to offer. Of course it's known as one of the greatest tourist places in the Caribbean.

Q: In the other islands, did you find the same kind of receptivity as you found in Barbados and Grenada?

BRITTON: I'd almost say more so. Why? Because when I went to those places, it was a singular situation. I came in as the American Ambassador, the most visible one. I was the

only ambassador on the island pretty much of the time, and so they went out of their way to be much more hospitable, to show how much they appreciated it and make you want to come back.

I'm not about to say that Barbados was less. In fact, in terms of the number of friends, I was completely at home in Barbados. But any time I went to the other places, of course, they went out of their way to make sure that all of the stops were out.

Q: We haven't talked very much about the other islands. Would you just outline them again, please, enumerate the islands that you were...

BRITTON: Antigua, which is the northern most part of the chain, and over to the side of it was St. Kitts. St. Christopher; Nevis; Anguilla, frequently spoken of as St. Kitts; and south of ... of Antigua, located right between Guadeloupe and Martinique, which are French, was the state of Dominica; and south of Dominica and Martinique was the island of St. Lucia; and from there down to ... to St. Vincent in the northern Grenadines; and, of course, Grenada in the southern Grenadines. This is what you had. As I say, we took care of the consular responsibilities for Montserrat and later Anguilla, which broke away from St. Kitts, and British Virgin Islands. And I had relations with all of them. I was well known to all of them.

Q: Were there any particular accomplishments that you're proud of for these islands?

BRITTON: In those islands? For some reason I can't think of anything outstanding that would have, you know, that would have been of any special note. I would say that in Antigua I tried to help them in many of their medical things: provided some medical materials for them; helped them to secure some medical supplies. Dominica I was concerned during the tragic accident they had and had collection of money sent to them and other things focused.

St. Kitts? I'm not quite sure that there was anything special that I could point to in the case of St. Kitts. I might say that another thing came up was in Antigua. We had an American who had been convicted of murder by reason of insanity. And he was kind of remaining in jail almost like vegetating and the people from the States had complaints and wanted to get him released. Their complaints, of course, were based on assumptions which weren't exactly positive about Antigua. Any time Americans are in jail in any foreign country, we automatically attribute the worst as happening to them and we forget that they are after all by and large for crime and not something that's political but frequently because of real crime. And here was a man that had been killed, another was paralyzed for life, and so forth. Anyway, the gentleman who had committed the crime was convicted by reason of insanity. The now majority leader of the House of Representatives was his Congressman. And he was interested in getting him over, back to the States to be put into a VA (Veterans Administration) mental facility. And working closely with the Government, I was able to get them to release the gentleman to go back, and they were able to pick him up through special arrangement and take him back.

Now this doesn't sound like much, except that to get this done means going through the Queen, the Privy Council and some other things. Then it would come back down to the Governor and to the Premier, or vice versa. And so it was no small undertaking. And secondly, it had to be done in such a way as not to infuriate the people of Antigua. And it had to be done in such a quiet way as to do it without attracting attention, which meant that it had to be a private conveyance as opposed to the usual airlines. You couldn't take him out the middle of the day, take him up British Overseas Airways, Pan Am or something like that. That was something that had to be done. And at one point, of course, we had some Americans who were detailed up in St. Kitts on a charge of gun-running or some thing like that. And they were taken in St. Kitts and put in jail. And I interceded with the Premier to get them released and ... (laughs) the next thing I find is that he was attacking me in no uncertain terms in the press for interfering in his country's affairs. Oh, he was very receptive the time that I talked with him. I guess maybe after he talked with

his advisers they said, “Well, you got to show this American Ambassador he can't intrude in our affairs.” Of course, posturing and blasting me and what have you, then he went ahead and released the people. You know you say, “Well, I succeeded and now that I've succeeded I'll take some kind of salve or something and rub my rear end where I've been beaten...” (laughs). But this is the kind of thing you undergo, and a number of those happen.

Again with regard to that question. I'm not sure whether the things that I did in those other countries loom very large in my mind. Maybe, maybe many of them could say yes, he did an awful lot for us just by being there, just by knowing that anytime there was a question we could call, just by setting a good example, just being a good representative which many of our youngsters could look up to. Remember the Vicar-General of the Anglican Church in Barbados, the largest church, went on to denounce the politicians of Barbados and he ended by saying the American Ambassador has done more to set a good example of public service and concern for people, and so forth, than any of the politicians. Well, needless to say, this wasn't going to ingratiate me to politicians. (laughs) I was there to say now please be ... (inaudible). But I had a good relation with him and with the Anglican Bishop, the Catholic Bishop and members of the Methodist Church, the Holiness Church, the little Hebrew congregation, the Ethiopian Hebrew congregation and even the Muslim ... I spoke to the Muslims a number of times. I knew much more about them and their background than they did down there, and so they appreciated it. This is all part of it.

Q: To round this interview out, we certainly need to have some information about your background. We can start first with perhaps some of the people who were most influential in your life.

BRITTON: There have been an awful lot of people who have been influential in my life and for that reason, in many cases I often say, as I said to someone yesterday: You never get there all by yourself. You get there because of an awful lot of good will and help and

support, sometime that you're least expecting, you don't even know about. And worst of all is when you begin to get overly proud or you're modest and don't even acknowledge that so many people helped you, because the person you're talking to may be the very one who said a good word for you at a time when you didn't know it, and you can assume you did it all by yourself.

I go back to it, when I was small, a gentleman used to come through town in South Carolina — its a little hamlet really — and he used to give me money for speaking, for spelling big words, and this got me started on something grand. It's compensatory motivation but at that age you're not exactly led to reflect from a philosophical standpoint.

Years later as I came into New York, I ultimately ended up in high school and I had a number of teachers along the way who encouraged me. I could count them all. And they always encouraged me.

I remember fighting with a boy over a funny book in high school and my teacher said, “Britton, I always looked upon you as a gentleman and scholar, and if this is the way you're going to waste your life on the floor fighting over a funny book, you can give up now.” I stopped and for the next twenty-five or thirty years I've never touched a funny book.

Going down the line there's just been so many teachers and so forth, who have inspired me. Obviously my mother and father were very kind and considerate and understanding and encouraged me along. And I suppose, one of the outstanding people, if not the most, would have been “Ma” Kline, Alberta T. Kline, used to be the director of New York City Missions Society's Harlem unit. Born in Orlando, Florida and grew up in that area and knew Mary McLeod Bethune and had come to New York, become member of a prominent family. One brother was a baker; had the largest bakery there in Harlem. One brother was director, executive director, of YMCA. Brother-in-law was the first captain in the Police Department, Emmanuel Kline, and who had a great deal of influence and a lot of ... had been a great deal of help to children of all backgrounds. I've quoted her many times in

some of my talks. Her motto used to be: “Equal opportunity means equal responsibility,” long before that became popular. So my “Ma” Kline probably had a very, very significant influence on my life. And over the years I certainly remember I've read so darn much that people have been an influence on my life without even knowing what they have done.

Recently my wife was over at a meeting and she sat next to a gentleman who she instantly recognized, and he introduced himself and his name was Senator Goldwater. And so she introduced herself and when she told my name he said, “Oh yes, I know the Ambassador.” Well, needless to say, my standing with my own wife went up significantly. Just as when she sat next to ... she sat, looked on the left side and there was — Rachel Robinson and she were talking — and she quickly recognized Rachel as being Mrs. Jackie Robinson. And Rachel in turn said, “Well, are you Ambassador Britton's wife?” Those kinds of things, you know, mean a lot to you in many ways. I've had a lot of respect for Jackie Robinson. I knew him. By the same token I've had an awful lot of respect for Senator Goldwater. I said to myself, “Gee, I got to send him a little note because sometimes you do things and you never realize, and I sometimes go out of my way to send those things. Just as this morning, in this meeting , this breakfast meeting with Mayor Koch, and a number of my fellow New Yorkers, and for him to come right into the meeting and say, “Oh, hi, Ted,” and then rush over to shake hands and say hello. Those little things.

I would say, on balance, between my parents and so forth, and people like “Ma” Kline, those have been the real significant people and every day I seem to run into someone new who has some special influence. When I think back to the patience of a young guy like Greg Lebedev who led me through all those thickets and so forth, to finally lead me into this position and finally said, “You know, the happiest day of my life is to see you appointed.” That kind of thing remains with you. There've been an awful lot of people to help me.

To tell you this, a little story that happened one day in Augusta, Georgia. I grew up in North Augusta, South Carolina. I came to New York: I became educated. Right in the almost

starting of my college years I was an avid reader of the New York Times. I was a snob. I went down to Georgia to visit my folks again and I went over to Augusta to get the paper. And coming out of the, coming out of the train station — obviously, I had to go into the white side of the train station — it was still segregated: colored, white.

I went on the white side to pick up the Times, but I certainly wasn't going to sit on the colored side to read it. So I started out with the Times under my arm and my nose very much in the air. And as I came out, a white fellow was coming in on my left and a colored fellow was coming in on my right, and they were about to reenter their respective sides. I came out between them, but something happened. I didn't watch my step and so I hit the little, little thing on the floor, and suddenly I found myself sailing towards the ground before I could catch myself. Well, both of those fellows caught me, one on each side, and kind of straightened me up, both physically and mentally. It said to me, no matter ... (laughs) ... how good you think you are, somebody can always help you and straighten you up.

It taught me a lot, because I thanked both of them and both of them were kind and said, “Are you all right?” And I said, “Yeah, I'm fine.” They didn't know me and I didn't know them. I didn't get their names and they didn't take my name. They just did it instinctively. Both of them were good people. I'm sure that the white fellow going on the majority side didn't have the foggiest feelings about, maybe, black folks doing this, or something like that. And on the other hand, the colored fellow coming on the other side didn't have any particular posture. It was just an acceptance of the system, which ultimately gave way, happily.

But by the same token, they didn't think twice about reaching out to help me, and that translates itself into many of the things that I do today. I shouldn't hesitate at all to reach out to help somebody else, and that's the way I pursue it. So if I tried to name all those who really influenced me, it would literally be in the thousands, in the thousands. I've met so many wonderful people.

One quick last one on Barbados. When I came into Barbados, shortly thereafter Queen Elizabeth II visited. She was a titular Head of State in Barbados. The Governor-General represented her. All of these diplomats were lined up out there then at night to be introduced to her. A long line; I was up towards the head of the line for some reason. And she came down; she was introduced. I was introduced to her by the Governor-General , and when she shook hands and said, “Welcome,” I returned her greeting and I commented on something. And there ensued a long conversation, almost five minutes or so. And by this time all my colleagues were looking back there to ask what was going on, because all eyes were centered on the Queen. The thing that I had said: “Gee, I haven't seen you since, golly, 1939, at the World's Fair in New York.” This started off something and you know, from there on we just talked and talked. I knew a lot about her family and I kept up on history and what have you. And she was dust so pleased by that.

But needless to say, by the time she got away everybody was wondering, “What in the world is going on up there?” So... (laughs) ...again when I say, for example, that I was there and the Queen and I talked at length and even I mention this in passing to British people. They say, “Well, have you ever met any of our people, the Queen or anything?” And I say, “Yes, I had quite a little conversation with the Queen.” They can't believe their ears, you know, it doesn't sound exactly ... but that's the way it was.

Q: Would you talk about your early years; your education; some of the things that helped to make you what you are today?

BRITTON: Coming up in South Carolina, attending a school, a one-room school, four grades, four rows. As you moved up, you went to a different row and finally you were out of the place and walking about three miles each morning to get to school up in the country. Finally into New York, starting off at PS (Public School) 157 in Harlem, down to lower Manhattan in Hell's Kitchen, going to school down there, and finally the High School of Commerce, and from the High School of Commerce into the Marine Corps.

My mother picked up my diploma from high school. I was already in service. Returning and getting inspired, I met a goodly number of young people who were already in college. We started meeting at a group called the Society for the Study of Negro History, in New York, which just fed on something I was already concerned with. And eventually from that I entered City College for a term; then into evening high school to make up credits, Harlem Evening High School; and then into N.Y.U. (New York University) for the next four years and a half, because I ended up going back in the service; and finally to graduate with my degree, and so forth.

Meeting an awful lot of wonderful people along the time, and learning an awful lot both about black people, and so forth. History, the ancient kingdoms of Mali, and Songhai and Ghana and what have you.

So years later when people were talking about finding themselves and their roots and what have you, I already had a sense of who I was and all of this new stuff was just old stuff in a sense, seems to me, because I've been so deeply rooted into black history. I was one of the readers of John Hope Franklin and so many other writers: E. Franklin Frazier, W.B. DuBois. Oh, you name it. Anything that was readable I would read it. I was a great reader. So they, they all had a great contribution to me and all of these things tended to influence me. You name it and I was there with it. I guess this heightened my sense of public awareness and eventually public service. I met my new boss, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, I think about 1957 or something like that, when he was a young lawyer and had just been appointed judge, one of the top judges in New York State; Sam Pierce I'm speaking of. And this, over the years I've known him.

I remember in 1979 I was still working down at 41st Street for D. Park Gibson Associates. D. Park was one of our outstanding marketing specialists. And sitting there in June getting a shoeshine, who comes walking along but Sam Pierce on the way to his office. We stopped and chatted a long time. For some reason, although we've never been close, we always seem to have an easy way of talking to each other. I remember standing outside

of St. Marks Church one day for two hours talking until the people starting pouring out of church and then we realized that it was time to break it up.

BRITTON: Yes. But to come back and find myself less than two years later with him a member of the President's Cabinet and I being one of his top assistants, handling international matters, negotiating agreements with China and Germany and other places ... (laughs) ... it's something.

Q: Would you tell us about your marriage and your subsequent family of that marriage.

BRITTON: I was married in 1950 in Texas to my first wife, Ruth, and she became the mother of my five children over the years. We remained married until 1980, at which time we amicably got a divorce. A wonderful person. I still think the world of Ruth, and I still look out for her in every respect.

About the same time, shortly sometimes thereafter, I married Vernell Stewart of Jacksonville, Florida, and we are still married. I still keep in close touch with my old family, including Ruth. And by the same token, I always say that anything that she ever needs, that I can provide for her, she gets and so on. I'm not sure that it always goes over big in some other quarters, but I do remain very close to them and have the greatest respect for her as a person, and so forth. And I have a lot of fond and happy memories from our years, too.

Q: Is there a new family?

BRITTON: No. Just the two of us. Vernell will not be able to have children unless we sometimes adopt children, for which she's very much concerned. I'm a little reserved on the subject. But thus far, it's just two of us.

Q: What advice would you give to young blacks who are considering entering the Foreign Service based on your experiences?

BRITTON: My advice would be to start early. Getting a good feel for language, yes, but more so than that, an awareness of how nations interact with each other.

Once Martin Luther King gave a speech in which he, it was based on the interdependence of people. And this was given in the Massey Lecture Series, in Canada, in which he mentioned various points that almost everyday starts off with a contribution from some other country, whether it means the food we eat, the tea coming from the East, or the coffee coming from South America, or sometimes other foods coming from other countries. We use cars, maybe, built in Japan, or something like that, or Germany; we dress in clothes made in South America, in Korea. And he speaks about interdependence.

Well, nations are like families and they're affected by the attitudes and actions of every other family. When our youngsters begin to see this and keep up with the various heads of these families, then they're very much involved in foreign affairs.

Down the years, if it's a country that has a different language from our own, it helps if we understand these languages. Once you have mastered one language, one additional language, you fall into new languages with no difficulty whatsoever. But it is important that we have a sensitivity to countries, their hopes and aspirations and their history, and to be alert to anything that affects them.

On that basis, then, we become immediate candidates for the Foreign Service. When one of the people spoke of her being asked something about the Soviet Union, she said, “What do I know about the Soviet Union?” And they said, “You'd better know everything about it.” So that she went ahead and studied. And when she finished, she knew something about all of the various ethnic groups comprising the Soviet Union, she knew much about the language, she knew much about the history and traditions, and so forth. Maybe she wouldn't have done it ever in life. It's too bad, of course, that she had to wait until at her particular age to start learning it. It should have been something that should have been coming along all of the time. But this is one of those things that I say that young folks,

if they want to ever go in the Foreign Service, should start early to being a part of their alert....

Q: Do you have any other things you'd like to say quickly to sum this all up?

BRITTON: Just that I think we need an awful lot more folks, black folks particularly, in the Foreign Service, in diplomacy itself. You say this: As an ambassador you deal from the top. You deal with prime ministers; you deal with presidents, emperors, kings, and so forth. And you find that they're human beings as you are, with the same kinds of problems and so forth, and it heightens your own self-importance. And you bring that back to other members of society around you, particularly our folks. This is something that we need. And so I encourage it very much so.

Q: Thank you very much, Ambassador Britton.

End of interview